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| COUNTRY<br>GERMANY   | REPORT NO.<br>E-A56-B-4577              | (LEAVE BLANK)<br>E-139276 |
| <b>AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT</b>   |   |                           |
| SUBJECT<br>Socio-Political Information   | (Interviewer)<br>QUADRY, Wolfgang (FN)  | (Editor)<br>AUSTIN        |
| AREA REPORTED ON<br>KALININGRAD,<br>UKHTA, BRATSK, STALINGRAD; USSR  | FROM (Agency)<br>7050th AISW (USAF)     |                           |
| DATE OF REPORT<br>24 Feb 54  | DATE OF INFORMATION<br>Oct 47 to Dec 53 | EVALUATION<br>C-3         |
| PREPARED BY (Officer)<br>HALBERT H. ACKER, Lt Col, USAF  | SOURCE<br>218132                        |                           |
| REFERENCES (Control number, directive, previous report, etc., as applicable)<br>218132-E-A56-B-4578;   |   |                           |
| SUMMARY: (Enter concise summary of report. Give significance in final one-sentence paragraph. List inclosures at lower left. Begin text of report on AF Form 112-Part II.)   |   |                           |
| <p><b>A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:</b></p> <p>1. SOURCE was born on 31 Jan 1925 at Oelde, Kreis Beckum. He attended eight (8) years elementary school, was carpenter by profession. SOURCE had a good knowledge of Russian both speaking and writing.</p> <p>2. From Oct 47 to Jan 48 SOURCE was confined in a PW prison at KALININGRAD (5443N/2030E). From Jan 48 to Apr 48 he was in transit from KALININGRAD to UKHTA (5613N/3110E). From Apr 48 to Feb 49 SOURCE was interned in the forced labor camp LAG. 20 at UKHTA and had contact with criminal and political prisoners. He worked as a carpenter in the forced labor camp. During the period from Feb 49 to Oct 50 SOURCE was confined in various forced labor camps, located in the BRATSK (5604N/10149E) area, including LAG. 016, LAG. 04, LAG. 07, LAG. 06, LAG. 05, and LAG. 018. In all camps SOURCE had close contact with political prisoners. Most of the time SOURCE stayed sick in the camps and worked only temporarily on reconstr of the RR line from TAYSHET (5556N/9800E) to BRATSK. In Jul and Aug 50 SOURCE temporarily worked as a handyman on the constr of a RR bridge at BRATSK. From Oct 50 to Jan 51, SOURCE was hospitalized in PW camp # ? /2 at STALINGRAD (4842N/4430E). From Jan 51 to May 51 SOURCE was interned in PW camp # ? /1 at STALINGRAD and worked as a handyman on housing and road constr. During the period from May 51 to Dec 53 SOURCE was interned in PW camp # 5110/45 at ASBEST (5701N/6130E). Most of the time SOURCE was hospitalized in the PW camp and temporarily he worked as a carpenter in asbestos plants. During both last mentioned periods, SOURCE had little contact with Russian civilians.</p> <p>a. SOURCE was tried by the Soviet Court Martial at KALININGRAD on 20 Dec 1947. The board of judges consisted of five (5) MVD officers headed by a Major of the MVD. The interrogation officer was 1st Lt of the MVD, SAIZOFF. The trial was conducted in a very arbitrary manner and SOURCE was not permitted to nominate a counsel for his defense. SOURCE was sentenced to twenty-five (25) years forced labor and confinement in a forced labor camp because he was a member of the 717th Inf. Div., which was accused for having committed war crimes during World War II. SOURCE stated that he actually belonged to this unit only for one day prior to his capture. The verdict was based on the UKAS (Law) 43 of the military penal code. SOURCE reported that there was no differentiation between prisoners sentenced for war crimes and others sentenced for "grave crimes against peace and humanity" and he presumed that both types of prisoners were being released.</p> <p>3. SOURCE was very cooperative although he was in a very weak physical condition and suffered from a heart and a pulmonary disease. This interviewer believes that SOURCE's answers to the questions regarding Soviet attitudes and popular react-</p> |   |                           |
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46

AF FORM 112 — PART III  
 APPROVED 1 JUNE 1948

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# AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

|                              |                            |                   |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| FROM (Agency)<br>7050th AISW | REPORT NO.<br>E-A56-B-4577 | PAGE 2 OF 5 PAGES |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|

ions to political actions were somewhat subjectively influenced by a general pessimistic attitude based on SOURCE's experiences in forced labor camps.

## B. SOVIET ATTITUDES TOWARD GENERAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS:

4. In SOURCE's opinion the major part of the common workers were opposed to the Soviet regime. They believed the regime to be responsible for the poor living conditions which as SOURCE stated were particularly grave in the ASBEST area.

5. SOURCE considered the party members, functionaries and the members of the Soviet youth organization "Komsomol" to be convinced and strong supporters of the regime. SOURCE was frequently warmed by common workers against criticizing the Soviet Union and its leaders in conversations with these people because he then would have to count upon immediate denouncement.

6. Russian civilians in STALINGRAD and ASBEST frequently expressed their dissatisfaction about poor quality of food, high prices, lack of consumer goods and poor housing conditions particularly in the ASBEST area. SOURCE stressed that workers, employed at the asbestos plants at ASBEST spoke rather enviously of the "Small kapitalistic village" when they talked about the PW camp, because the housing conditions in the PW camp were much better than those for civilian residents. The poverty of the common workers was so vast that they quite frequently requested food from PWs.

## C. EVENTS FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF STALIN:

7. Common workers in the ASBEST area frequently criticized Stalin in conversation with PWs but only when they felt unobserved. They blamed him for their poor lot and often expressed a hatefull attitude by hurling imprecations against him. SOURCE emphasized that years before Stalin's death, a great many of the common workers based their hope for improvements only on his death. The workers felt betrayed by Stalin, who, as they often stated, did not carry out any of his promises regarding the improvement of the living conditions after World War II.

8. SOURCE heard the news of Stalin's death from a Russian civilian driver, who told him a joke on that occasion which was significant for the reaction of numerous people of the workers' class. This driver commented Stalin's death with the words: Formerly we had to say "Thanks Stalin" but now we are entitled to say "Thanks God" again. SOURCE gained the impression that the major part of the common workers felt relieved and were hopeful that their living conditions would improve. In SOURCE's opinion this was true for at least seventy-five (75) per cent of the population in the ASBEST area.

9. SOURCE heard from a Russian worker in one of the asbestos plants at ASBEST that all prisoners who were entitled to be released according to the amnesty act were actually released in Apr and May 53. The worker himself was released from an unknown forced labor camp. He told SOURCE that twelve (12) million criminal prisoners were set free. No political prisoners reportedly were among the freed men and women. The major part of the freed prisoners were not permitted to return to their original living places but were settled in so-called worker colonies which reportedly were controlled by the MVD. SOURCE heard from fellow PWs that the housing facilities of a former PW camp in the ASBEST area were used as quarters for an unknown number of former criminal prisoners. The reaction of the population was very different. Some of the workers to whom SOURCE talked about this amnesty were satisfied and believed that the regime accomplished the first step in the general trend to do more justice to the Soviet people, while others feared that the released prisoners would not find back to a normal and lawful civilian life but would commit new crimes and thus disturb the population. Shortly before SOURCE departed from the ASBEST area, he actually heard from Russian civilian workers, that numerous criminals were re-arrested for having committed new crimes after their release from the forced labor camps.

11. SOURCE believed that the price cut under the provisions of the price reduction law was not sufficient to improve the existing food problem for the people of the workers' class in the ASBEST area. SOURCE frequently heard from workers in

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# AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

|                              |                            |                   |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| FROM (Agency)<br>7050th AISW | REPORT NO.<br>E-A56-B-4577 | PAGE 3 OF 5 PAGES |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|

the asbestos plants, drivers and general workers, that their earnings were still too low to buy the desired amounts of food with the reduced prices.

13. All Soviet citizens, including workers, drivers and guards, to whom SOURCE talked about the June 17 revolt in East Berlin believed firmly that the revolt was initiated by the Western Powers and "fascists elements", who supported and paid the rioters. This version of the revolt was broadcasted through the Soviet radio and in Soviet and Sovzone newspapers, which also were available in the PW camp. SOURCE never noticed any signs of sympathy for the workers of East Germany among the civilian workers in the ASBEST area. He heard from a Russian civilian that the vacant working places of PWs, who were repatriated about four (4) weeks after the June 17 revolt, were to be occupied by rioters, arrested in East Berlin and other cities of the Sovzone. None of the rioters arrived yet in the ASBEST area prior to SOURCE's departure. SOURCE admitted that a great number of PWs felt very harrassed about the June 17 revolt because the travel orders for a transport of 300 or 400 PWs to be repatriated were cancelled immediately after the announcement of the revolt. The transport then departed for Germany about four (4) weeks after the initial repatriation date.

14. SOURCE never heard rumors explaining the reason for Beria's downfall. In conversations with a teacher SOURCE learned that Beria was actually arrested four (4) days prior to the official announcement. No special security measures occurred in the ASBEST area after Beria's arrest. SOURCE heard from fellow PWs, who were transferred from SVERDLOVSK (5650N/6036E) to ASBEST in Jul 53 or Aug 53, that several high ranking MVD officers of the SVERDLOVSK district were replaced by other MVD officers several days after the announcement of Beria's arrest. The civilian population seemed to be generally satisfied with Beria's downfall although some of the workers expressed their fear that Beria's arrest would cause new power struggles among the Soviet top leaders and definitely would weaken the position of the Soviet Union in the world.

16. There was no evidence in the ASBEST area that the announcements of Malenkov and Khrushchev regarding the improvement of agricultural production and food supply were carried out. No increased food supplies were sold in this area in state stores and in the free market prior to SOURCE's departure.

17. The common workers, drivers and guards with whom SOURCE had contact, believed Malenkov to be the strongest man and the real power of the new regime. These people presumed that the other top leaders acknowledged Stalin's wish according to which Malenkov was his direct successor. Malenkov also was given the most credit for the ameliorative measures carried out by the regime after Stalin's death.

18. It was SOURCE's impression that the Soviet citizens were happier under the present regime than under Stalin's. The common workers in particular were hopeful that their living conditions would gradually improve, although these people in the underprivileged area of ASBEST did not expect any miraculous accomplishments of the new regime.

## D. PURGES, RESISTENCE ACTIVITIES AND MASS ARRESTS:

19. From Feb 49 to Oct 50, SOURCE was confined in seven (7) forced labor camps in the BRATSK area. All inmates of these camps were political prisoners the major part of whom were sentenced for espionage, desertion and conspiracy against the Soviet Government. SOURCE repeatedly heard from fellow prisoners that several former high ranking officers of the Red Army, scientists and other leading Soviet citizens were among the political prisoners, personally he never met these individuals.

22. About forty (40) per cent of the average number of 800 inmates in the forced labor camps in the BRATSK area were Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians and Poles. The major part of these prisoners served twenty-five (25) years terms for espionage and conspiracy against the Soviet Government. SOURCE heard from these people that Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians and Poles were deported on a mass scale after World War II and were settled in all parts of the Soviet Union. A great number of Baltic people, in particular Lithuanians and Latvians reportedly were confined

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|                              |                            |                   |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| FROM (Agency)<br>7050th AISW | REPORT NO.<br>E-A56-B-4577 | PAGE 4 OF 5 PAGES |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|

as political prisoners in forced labor camps. SOURCE heard from Latvians that the Estonians were more collaborative with the Soviets than others.

## E. FORCED LABOR CAMPS:

23. SOURCE was confined in the following forced labor camps:

| Dates             | Location                | Number (LAG) | Number of Inmates | Nationality of prisoners  | Type of prisoners                    | Type of work   |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| Apr 48-<br>Feb 49 | UKHTA                   | 20           | 3,500-<br>4,000   | 90% Russians<br>10% Baltic na-<br>tion, & Germans                       | 90% crimi-<br>nals, 10%<br>political | Lumbering,<br>Road constr  |
| Feb 49-<br>May 49 | BRATSK                  | 016          | 900               | Russians<br>Lithuanians<br>Estonians<br>Latvians<br>Japanese<br>Germans | All poli-<br>tical pri-<br>soners    | Maintaining<br>of RR line,<br>Lumbering                                |
| May 49-<br>Aug 49 | BRATSK<br>(18 km W)     | 04           | 1,000-<br>1,200   | Same  | Same                                 | This camp was<br>a hospital for<br>all camps in<br>BRATSK area         |
| Aug 49-<br>Oct 49 | 10-12 km W<br>of BRATSK | 07           | 800               | Same  | Same                                 | Maintaining of<br>RR line and<br>lumbering                             |
| Oct 49-<br>Dec 49 | BRATSK                  | 06           | 500               | Same  | Same                                 | Same   |
| Dec 49-<br>Mar 50 | BRATSK                  | 05           | 700               | Same  | Same                                 | Same   |
| Mar 50-<br>Oct 50 | BRATSK                  | 018          | 1,000             | Same  | Same                                 | Bridge constr,<br>Maintaining of<br>RR line,<br>Lumbering, Saw<br>Mill |

An unknown number of forced labor camps were located at about five (5) km intervals at the RR line from TAYSHET to BRATSK. SOURCE reported that the inmates of the various camps were transferred quite frequently from one camp to another. All inmates of the camps were political prisoners, the major part of whom worked on maintaining the RR line.

24. In the forced labor camp LAG 05, located at an unknown distance W of BRATSK, SOURCE met in Mar 50 one American prisoner. Name was unknown. He was about thirty-five to forty (35-40) years of age, 170 cm tall of very stout structure with dark blonde hair and grey eyes. SOURCE once talked to this prisoner and learned that he was sentenced to twenty-five (25) years of confinement in forced labor camps for espionage. (UKAS 58/6). The American remained in this camp when SOURCE was transferred in Mar 50.

25. SOURCE did not notice any changes in the treatment of forced laborers after 1949. Food rations were not increased after Stalin's death. The main administration of all forced labor camps in the BRATSK area was transferred from BRATSK to TAYSHET in summer 1950. The responsible officer, in charge of all camps in this area was a Major of the MVD of unknown name, as SOURCE heard from fellow PWs.

## F. VOICE OF AMERICA:

31. The people whom SOURCE had contact with in the ASBEST area obtained the info about the June 17 revolt from Soviet radio broadcasts and through newspaper. During the entire period of his stay in the Soviet Union SOURCE never heard anything about the VOA or other foreign radio broadcasts and he consequently presumed that

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## AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

FROM (Agency)

7050th AISW

REPORT NO.

E-A56-B-4577

PAGE 5 OF 5 PAGES

these broadcasts could not be received in the areas where he stayed.

APPROVED:

*D.M. Allison*

D.M. ALLISON  
Colonel, United States Air Force  
Commander

*J. W. Stofft, Capt.*

HALBERT H. ACKER  
Lt Col, USAF  
Commander  
7056 AISS

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